
Fisher

Martes pennanti

Mammalia — Carnivora — Mustelidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Secure (G5)
Statewide: Critically imperiled (S1)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: Sensitive; Region 4: Sensitive
BLM: Regional/State imperiled (Type 3)
IDFG: Furbearing animal

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Low populations and lack of population trend data in Idaho.

TAXONOMY

Three subspecies are recognized. The subspecies *M. pennanti columbiana* occurs in Idaho.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The fisher is endemic to North America and occurs throughout much of Canada and in the northern U. S. Within Idaho the species occurs in the northern and central parts of the state. During the early 1960s the fisher was thought to be extirpated from the state (Williams 1962b) and individuals were translocated to 3 north-central Idaho sites during the early 1960s (Williams 1963).

POPULATION TREND

There is no estimate of population trend for Idaho.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

The fisher occurs in conifer and mixed conifer-hardwood forests in North America. In Idaho, the species occurs in a mosaic of mesic conifer, dry conifer, and subalpine forests. Mature and old-growth forests are used during summer, and young and old-growth forests are used during winter (Jones 1991). Forested riparian habitat is also important, and stream courses may be used as travel corridors (Jones 1991). Occupied habitat often has a high percentage of canopy coverage, although tree cover may be quite low in some areas (Lugue 1983). The fisher is an opportunistic predator; prey includes rabbits, squirrels, and porcupines.

ISSUES

Over-harvesting by trappers and loss of habitat to massive forest fires in northern Idaho contributed to the historical decline of this species (Jones 1991). Habitat loss and degradation continue to threaten populations. Loss of forested habitat, particularly old-growth forests, to fire and timber harvest results in the reduction and fragmentation of suitable habitat. Incidental trapping of fishers with marten traps may also be an

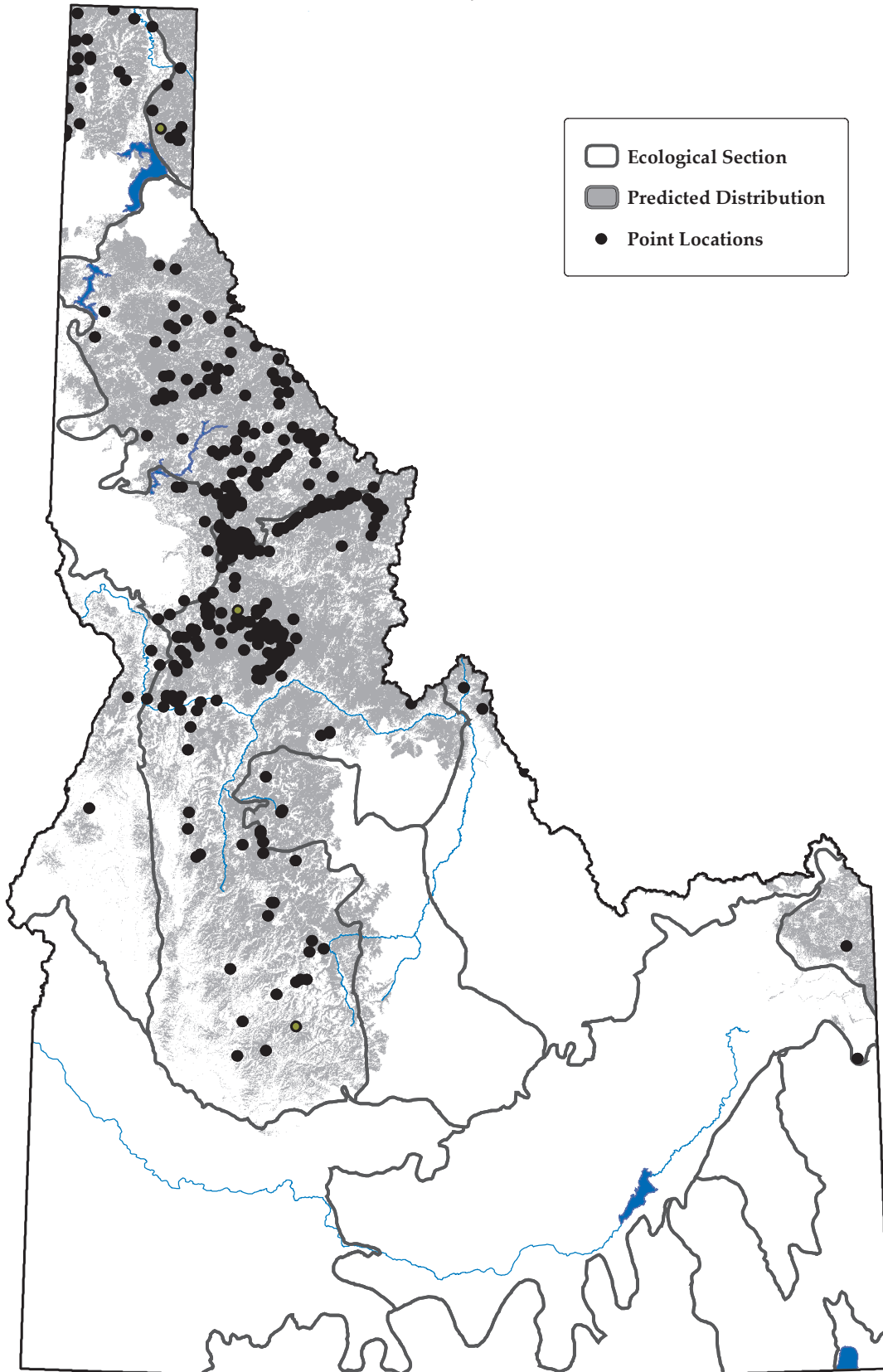
important source of mortality, particularly where populations are small and fragmented. Small, isolated populations may lose genetic diversity and have a higher probability of extinction.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Information is needed to determine the current status of populations in some areas. Research is needed to evaluate landscape- and regional-scale responses to disturbance and forest management practices. Protection and restoration of important habitat may be necessary. Forest management that maintains a balance of old growth and early seral-stage forests and protects riparian habitat may be required to sustain viable populations. Information is also needed with regard to inter-relationships between habitat fragmentation, movement patterns, and the genetic composition of populations.

Fisher

Martes pennanti



Map created on November 17, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution
is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR),
A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish
and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002).
Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to
http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

